WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An airbag having openings in a rear panel for receiving inflation gas and having a front panel configured to face an occupant of a vehicle wherein:

the interior of the airbag is partitioned into a central chamber facing the openings, an outer-peripheral front chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the front panel, and an outer-peripheral rear chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the rear panel;

the outer-peripheral rear chamber communicates with the exterior of the airbag through vent holes;

the central chamber communicates directly with the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber;

the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber communicate with each other only via the central chamber; and

wherein the airbag is configured so that the gas for inflating the airbag flows from the central chamber into the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber.

2. An airbag having openings for supplying gas on the rear and facing an occupant in inflation on the front, wherein:

the interior of the airbag is partitioned into a central chamber facing the openings, an outer-peripheral front chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the front, and an outer-peripheral rear chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the rear;

the outer-peripheral rear chamber communicates with the exterior of the airbag through vent holes;

the central chamber communicates directly with the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber;

the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber communicate directly with each other; and wherein the airbag is configured so that the gas for inflating the airbag flows from the central chamber into the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber.

3. An airbag according to Claim 1, wherein the central chamber is arranged to reach from the rear to the front of the airbag during inflation.

4. An airbag according to Claim 2, wherein the central chamber is arranged to reach from the rear to the front of the airbag during inflation.

5. An airbag system comprising an airbag and an inflator for inflating the airbag, wherein:

the interior of the airbag is partitioned into a central chamber facing the openings, an outer-peripheral front chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the front, and an outer-peripheral rear chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the rear;

the outer-peripheral rear chamber communicates with the exterior of the airbag through vent holes;

the central chamber communicates directly with the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber;

the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber communicate with each other only via the central chamber; and

wherein the airbag is configured so that the gas for inflating the airbag flows from the central chamber into the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber; and

gas from the inflator is supplied to the central chamber.

6. An airbag system according to claim 5, wherein the central chamber is arranged to reach from the rear to the front of the airbag during inflation.

7. An airbag system comprising an airbag and an inflator for inflating the airbag, wherein:

the interior of the airbag is partitioned into a central chamber facing the openings, an outer-peripheral front chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the front, and an outer-peripheral rear chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central chamber adjacent to the rear;

wherein the outer-peripheral rear and front chambers communicate directly with the exterior of the airbag through vent holes; and

wherein the central chamber communicates directly with the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber; and

wherein the airbag is configured so that the gas for inflating the airbag flows from the central chamber into the outer-peripheral front chamber and the outer-peripheral rear chamber; and

gas from the inflator is supplied to the central chamber.

8. An airbag system according to claim 7, wherein the central chamber is arranged to reach from the rear to the front of the airbag during inflation.

9. An airbag system comprising:

an airbag having openings for receiving an inflation gas in a rear panel and having front panel configured to face an occupant; and

an inflator for inflating the airbag, wherein:

the interior of the airbag includes:

a central rear chamber arranged adjacent the rear panel and facing the openings;

a front chamber arranged adjacent the front panel; and

an outer-peripheral chamber arranged on the outer periphery of the central rear chamber;

wherein the central rear chamber, the front chamber, and the outer-peripheral chamber communicate with one another; and wherein the inflator includes a plurality of gas generators configured to generate gas with different timings.

10. An airbag system according to Claim 9, wherein the front chamber of the airbag occupies substantially the entire area adjacent the front panel of the airbag

11. An airbag system comprising:

an airbag having a front panel and a rear panel;

the front panel and the rear panel being joined at the peripheral edges thereof; the rear panel comprising a central opening for receiving a gas generator;

an inner panel for dividing the interior of the airbag into a centrally located first chamber and a second chamber surrounding the first chamber;

the inner panel including a central opening substantially concentric with the opening of the rear panel; and

the inner panel being joined along the peripheral edge thereof on the distal end side to the front panel at the midsection between the central portion and the peripheral edge thereof,

wherein the gas generator includes first and second gas generating units, wherein the gas generating units each include a gas injection port; and

wherein the inner panel includes a port that permits fluid communication between the first chamber and the second chamber, the port being positioned to oppose the gas injection port of the first gas generating unit and wherein the gas injection port of the second gas generating unit does not oppose the port of the inner panel when the airbag is deployed.

12. An airbag system according to Claim 11, wherein the rear panel is formed with a vent hole, and the inner panel is formed with an inner vent hole that permits fluid communication between the first chamber and the second chamber.

13. An airbag system comprising:

an airbag having first and second chambers and a plurality of ports that are configured to permit fluid communication between the first and second chambers; wherein each port is positioned directly opposite a gas injection port of a gas generating unit.

14. An airbag comprising:

a front panel and a rear panel, the circumferential portions of the front panel and the rear panel being bonded to each other, wherein the rear panel has a gas-generator-engaging opening formed at the central part thereof,

an inner panel for partitioning the inner space of the airbag into a central first compartment and a second compartment encircling the first compartment, wherein the inner panel has a central opening almost concentric with the opening of the rear panel,

wherein the front circumferential portion of the inner panel is bonded to an intermediate portion lying between a central portion and the circumferential portion of the front panel,

wherein the inner panel has at least one communication port formed close to the rear thereof, for mutual communication of the first compartment and the second compartment, and

wherein the communication port lies on the line extending along a gas-discharge direction of the gas generator when the airbag is inflated.

15. The airbag according to Claim 14, wherein the rear panel has at least one vent hole formed therein, and the inner panel has at least one inner vent hole formed therein for mutual communication of the first compartment and the second compartment.

16. An airbag apparatus comprising:

an airbag and a gas generator having at least one gas-discharge opening,

wherein at least the front of the gas generator is disposed in the airbag and the gas-discharge opening is disposed in the airbag,

wherein the airbag includes a front panel and a rear panel disposed remote from the passenger, the circumferential portions of the front panel and the rear panel being bonded to each other,

wherein the rear panel has a gas-generator-engaging opening formed at the central part thereof,

wherein the airbag further includes an inner panel for partitioning the inner space of the airbag into a central first compartment and a second compartment encircling the first compartment,

wherein the inner panel has an opening formed at the central part thereof so as to be almost concentric with the opening of the rear panel,

wherein the front circumferential portion of the inner panel is bonded to an intermediate portion lying between the central portion and the circumferential portion of the front panel,

wherein the inner panel includes a port that permits fluid communication between the first compartment and the second compartment, wherein the port is located on a line extending in a direction that gas is discharged from the gas-discharge opening of the gas generator.

17. The airbag apparatus according to Claim 16,

wherein the gas generator includes a plurality of gas-discharge openings,

wherein the inner panel includes a plurality of communication ports, wherein more than one of the plurality of communication ports is located along a line extending in a direction that gas is discharged from one of the gas-discharge openings; wherein the panel portion of the inner panel lies on the lines extending along gas-discharge directions of the remaining of the gas-discharge openings.

18. The airbag apparatus according to Claim 16, wherein the first compartment and the second compartment inflate almost simultaneously when the gas generator is activated.

19. An airbag apparatus comprising:

an airbag and a gas generator having at least one gas-discharge opening,

wherein at least the front of the gas generator is disposed in the airbag and the gas-discharge opening is disposed in the airbag,

wherein the inner space of the airbag is partitioned into a central first compartment and a second compartment encircling the first compartment, and wherein the first compartment and the second compartment inflate almost simultaneously when the gas generator is activated.